

That Did It! . . .

Close Call With Auto Repair Tool Left Gene Ingram Airborne — Carthage Bound

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“That did it!” the man said, and it did.

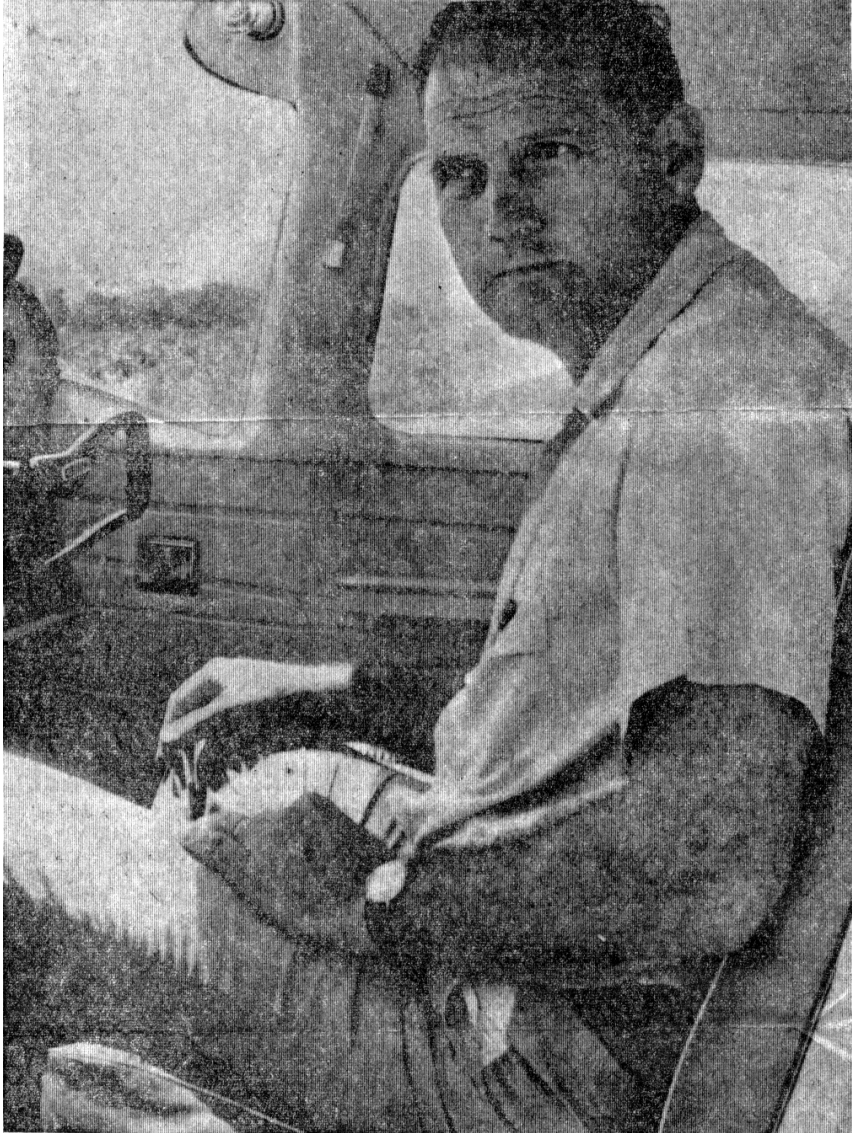
Photo caption: Gene Ingram is operator of Carthage Airways and manager of Myers Memorial Air Park, where Aviation Appreciation Days will be held Saturday through Monday. The decisive moment which led to his present career is described in the accompanying text.

Several years ago, the younger half of a father - son combination — operators of a successful garage and automobile repair shop in a small town in Illinois — was working at straightening a portion of the steering mechanism of an automobile.

While busily engaged in this task, a piece of the equipment used in the process slipped and whistled by his ear. Thinking to himself, “That was close,” he repositioned the piece for another try and again applied pressure. As sometimes happens, the piece again flew off, coming even closer to his head. In fact, so close he could feel the breeze.

Dropping his equipment, he angrily exclaimed, “That did it!”

This is an expression often used to show disgust at a particular event or series of circumstances proving exasperating. But, unlike so many of us who might say, “That did it,” and keep on with the same job, this man did something about it.



In less than a year, he had purchased a used airplane and, picking up the threads of a childhood ambition, began taking flying lessons and obtained his private pilot certificate, his commercial certificate and an instructor rating. While still in this one-year period, he had dissolved his association with the garage and began to establish himself in the aviation field.

Eugene C. Ingram, after checking other sites, chose Carthage as the location for his new career — as owner and operator of a flying service engaged in charter flights and flight instruction for people who have a desire to participate in the rapidly expanding field of general aviation.

Ingram has a deep and abiding love of flying. Anyone who talks with him soon will realize that, just as a musician has a deep and lasting love for his chosen field, as the artisan has an intense pride in his work, this airman brings to his field an attitude which, until recently, has been sadly lacking in his profession.

He has a deep-rooted conviction that not only is flying a safe, practical and economical means of transportation, but it also provides a large measure of enjoyment to the pilot, whether used for business purposes or pleasure, as by the “week-end pilot.”

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Gene or “Ink,” as he is known in his hometown of Terre Haute, Ill., his wife, Marilyn, and two sons, Mark and Chris, who live at 1920 South Maple, have carried the burden of firmly establishing their business, Carthage Airways. Recently, there has been an addition to the staff, Roger Loudon, formerly of Los Angeles, Calif., who is assuming part of the duties of charter flights and flight instruction.

Last October, Ingram had the unusual opportunity to supervise his son Mark’s first solo flight, which occurred on Mark’s 16th birthday. The young man soloed three different aircraft, ranging in size from a small two-place trainer to much more sophisticated and heavier aircraft. Mark had a full day since, in addition to his solo flights, he flew to Wichita, Kan., and ferried a new four-passenger airplane from the Cessna plant back to Carthage.

Mr. and Mrs. Ingram are members of the First Methodist church, where they have been active since their arrival in Carthage. He has served on several church boards, taught Sunday school and served in any capacity asked of him.

Mrs. Ingram has, for several years, been in charge of the nursery. She also is a member of the Soroptimist club. Mark, in addition to his flying, is a dedicated member of several Carthage Senior high school music groups. Chris, 13, the athlete in the family, now is taking flying lessons, but according to FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) regulations, must wait, impatiently, until he is sixteen to solo. Chris is a member of Carthage Junior high school band.

This weekend, July 2, 3 and 4, the Ingrams, as operators of Carthage Airways, Myers Memorial Air Park, will celebrate their fourth anniversary in Carthage with Aviation Appreciation Days. There will be a static display of Cessna airplanes. For those desiring, there will be plane rides at one cent per pound.

With his wry sense of humor, Ingram has a ready answer for reluctant passengers. He seriously assures them that he always keeps a small box of dirt handy so they can “keep one foot on the ground.”

Wilbur Staib, Diamond, will perform in the “World’s Smallest Twin-Engine Plane,” appropriately called the airy plane. This minute plane, latest in a series of Staib’s home-builts, is powered by two 10-horsepower lawn mower engines.

Myers Memorial Air Park came into existence, as such, December 23, 1932, when a general warranty deed was granted to Carthage Chamber of Commerce by Mrs. Edna Myers.

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Since its beginnings it has undergone several periods of modification and improvement. The latest of these took place in 1965, when the present northeast-southwest runway was extended in length from 2,000 feet to 3,000 feet. A new runway lighting system was installed on the extended runway. New hangar space was constructed, to accommodate five more aircraft.

The service ramp was nearly doubled in size and a connecting taxiway at the south end of the airport was constructed to connect the north-south runway with the northeast-southwest runway. Central air conditioning of the administration building, as well as other minor improvements at various sites at the airport were made.

It is Ingram’s feeling that the city of Carthage should be commended for its efforts in the improvements and that the city will maintain its attitude of progressiveness in providing the facilities which are a vital part of the age in which we live.

It is this feeling which caused him to plan the three-day Aviation Appreciation celebration.

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